

THE JUGGLERS DETECTED.

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DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED BY REQUEST,

IN THE

CHAPEL STREET. CHURCH, NEW HAVEN,

DECEMBER 30, 1860,

BY LEONARD BACON,

PASTOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH,

WITH AN APPENDIX.

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# DISCOURSE.

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II TIMOTHY, III, 8, 9.

“NOW AS JANNES AND JAMBRES WITHSTOOD MOSES, SO DO THESE ALSO RESIST THE TRUTH; MEN OF CORRUPT MINDS REPROBATE CONCERNING THE FAITH.

“BUT THEY SHALL PROCEED NO FURTHER: FOR THEIR FOLLY SHALL BE MANIFEST UNTO ALL *men*, AS THEIRS ALSO WAS.”

A CERTAIN class of persons in this community have long professed a very violent objection to any preaching which might be capable of an application to any political question, and, above all, to any preaching about slavery, that subject being preëminently political. But the objection seems to be given up at last by those who have been most zealous in maintaining it. Their love for what they call “the simple\* gospel,” has yielded under the pressure of a great exigency; and by their arrangement an ultra-Calvinist preacher, a “true blue Presbyterian” of the narrowest and most rigorous school of orthodoxy, has had the opportunity of preaching to the public of New Haven, through a political newspaper, a most political sermon, which he had at first preached from a pulpit elsewhere to a Sabbath congregation, on that most political of all subjects—slavery. And not only so, but that most political sermon, on a most political subject, printed in a political newspaper heretofore most abhorrent of political preaching, was editorially commended to the public as an excellent piece of religious reading for the Sabbath day. Surely religion and politics are not quite so far apart in these days, as they were once thought to be. We are naturally reminded of what Pharaoh did when he was disconcerted with the signs of divine authority which

Moses exhibited. He "called the wise men and the sorcerers," and "they also did in like manner with their enchantments."

I may proceed, then, without apology, to the task which I have undertaken for this evening. The sermon referred to has been largely circulated here and elsewhere, for political purposes. Those who have done this, have either been blinded to the demoralizing and infidel tendency of the sermon, or have been guiltily indifferent to the mischief which may come from such attempts to make men believe that the Bible is the warrant, and God the patron of American slavery. It has been reported to me that the minds of some young men especially, have been shaken in their moral principles by the reading of that sermon, and I have been requested to point out its fallacies, and to show what the truth is. Those who have taken pains to circulate that sermon in this community, and to commend it as appropriate to the Sabbath, may very naturally be displeased with the refutation of it; but they will hardly be brazen enough to cry out against political preaching.

The pertinence of our text to the occasion has already been hinted at, and will be illustrated in the progress of this discourse. Moses, as we all know, was an abolitionist—not in the perverted and abusive sense of that word, but in its true and honorable meaning. He had undertaken to demand—and to achieve the freedom of six hundred thousand slaves. The Israelites in Egypt were held in slavery as the bondmen of Pharaoh by a tenure as legitimate as that by which the slaves in the United States are held to-day. They were of a foreign race, odious to the Egyptians. By the statesmanship of that age, their liberty was pronounced to be inconsistent with the public safety, [Ex. i, 10,] and therefore they were enslaved. And had the Egyptians needed any supplementary arguments to justify the slavery of the Hebrews—such as the political sciolists and the Southern and South-side theologians of our country offer in their apologies for the slavery of the Africo-Americans—they might have had them. Do we talk of the antipathy of races? It was as great in Egypt as it is in these States. There, it was the imperial, conquering race of Ham—the leaders of the world's civilization—the builders of the pyramids and of those

temples and monuments, which, after the lapse of "forty centuries," are even in their ruins the marvel of the world—a race glorious in arts and arms, in wisdom and in wealth—against the semi-civilized nomadic race of Shem; just as here it is said to be the Anglo-Saxon race of Japhet against the race of Ham. Is American slavery justified by *Cotton*, and by the inquiry, "how can *cotton* be raised at the South without slaves?" There the cry was, "*Brick!*" "How can we get *brick* to build our royal treasure cities? Think you that these Hebrews will work at making brick, if they are set free?" The rapid growth of the slave population—an increase so much like that of other animals held as property—is often alleged as proof that slavery is good for the slaves, and therefore justifiable. So it was in Egypt. "The children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, and multiplied," [Ex. i, 7:] "and the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew." [Verse 12.] Is it said that the slavery of the enslaved class in the United States is only the fulfillment of an ancient prophecy pronounced by Noah upon one of the sons of Ham? [Gen. ix, 25.] So it might have been said in Egypt, by iron-hearted theologians, that the slavery of the Israelites there was only the fulfillment of a more recent prediction, and a more pertinent and explicit one. "Know of a surety," said God to Abraham, "that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them four hundred years." [Gen. xv, 13.] Is it said in apology for the enslaving of these Africo-Americans, that great and beneficent designs of God's providence are to be accomplished by means of it—that in the house of their bondage they are learning the arts and habits of civilization? With far more confidence might the same thing have been said concerning the slavery of the Israelites in Egypt. It was in their bondage to a more civilized people than themselves that God prepared them for their destiny. In Egypt they acquired that measure of civilization and of acquaintance with the arts of civilization, by which they were qualified to become a people. Their illustrious ancestors in their land of promise had been princely and saintly Bedouin, dwelling in tents, ever roaming with their flocks and herds to find "fresh

fields and pastures new," leaving no monuments but wells, and acquiring no inheritance but a burial-place. But after that long bondage in Egypt, finished with forty years of still severer discipline in the desert, the Israelites returned into the land of Canaan conquerors, civilizers, cultivators of the soil, builders of cities. Not one argument can be urged in defense or palliation of the slavery existing in the United States to-day, which might not be urged with equal force in behalf of the slavery against which Moses appeared in the name of the Lord.

We cannot wonder, then, that the great slaveholding power in Egypt rejected indignantly the demand for the emancipation of six hundred thousand slaves. We cannot wonder that in answer to so dangerous a demand, new restrictions and more grievous burthens were imposed on the oppressed Hebrews. Read the story again which you have read so many times, and see the disastrous effect of making any movement against slavery, even when you know that God is on your side, or rather that you are on the side of God. You will seem to hear pitiful and philanthropic Egyptians throwing it out against Moses in the name of humanity, that the poor slaves are only the more oppressed for his attempt to obtain their emancipation. You will see the Hebrews themselves turning against their divinely commissioned benefactor with the reproach that he is doing them more harm than good.

Yet Moses persisted, and God was with him. Strange as it may seem to those who put their trust in such sermons as the one referred to, God was *not* on the side of the slaveholding power in that instance. Moses persisted; and how majestically does the story of emancipation—the oldest story of the kind in the world's history—proceed to its triumphant close! The proud king would not believe that the supreme power of the universe cared for the Hebrew slaves of Egypt, or was the enemy of oppression. "Who is the Lord," he said, "that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? You tell me of 'the God of Israel;' I do not believe in him; I believe in the gods of Egypt; I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." The occasion was such—the juncture in the history of the world and of redemption was such—the relation of the events to all the

future of God's kingdom was such—that God interposed with miraculous manifestations to attest the Divine authority of the demand which Moses was urging in his name. A simple and palpable sign was given, but Pharaoh found a way of avoiding the conviction that Moses was right. Then followed the stupendous series of the plagues of Egypt, ending in the death of the first-born—no, not ending till the waters of the Red Sea, that had parted for the fugitives from slavery to pass over, returned with awful sweep into the channel, and Pharaoh and “the Memphian chivalry,” overthrown and drowned, were tossed like sea-weed on the angry surge. Through all the ages of time till time shall be no more, the nations that receive the Bible catch an exultant inspiration from that song of the emancipated Hebrews, which woke the echoes of the wilderness more than three thousand years ago :

“ I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously ;  
The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.”

This, then—this story of oppression and deliverance—is the earliest explicit indication which the Bible gives us of how God looks on slavery. Can anybody read this story and wonder why it is that the Bible is so often thought to be a dangerous book for slaves to read! And do you wonder why it is, that of all the charming stories in the Bible, this is the one which more perhaps than any other, pleases and fascinates the slaves in our slaveholding States? I remember a fact which I heard in one of those States about twenty years ago. Two devout and excellent ladies, the proprietors of a plantation, were moved, by a most attractive example in their neighborhood, to institute a system of Christian instruction for their slaves, whom they had always treated with much kindness, and of whose kind feelings toward them they had no doubt. Accordingly, they proposed to their people to come together daily for prayer, and “we,” said they, “will read the Bible to you as Mr. \* \* \* does to his people.” The negroes took the matter into consideration, and accepted the proposal; “only,” they said, “please, mistress, read to us about Moses and the children of Israel going out of Egypt.” There is no mistaking the im-

pression which the story of that great deliverance makes on an unsophisticated mind.

But what was the part of Jannes and Jambres in the story? These names are given in the Jewish traditions to the two chiefs of the "wise men and sorcerers," or "magicians," who undertook to refute the evidences which Moses gave of his Divine commission; and the Apostle uses these two names as a convenient mode of designating the entire class whose part in the story is described again and again by the phrase, "The magicians did in like manner with their enchantments." By various arts of jugglery and sleight-of-hand, combined, no doubt, with superstitious incantations—for such things have been in all ages the stock in trade of the professors of magical arts,—they attempted to overcome the evidence of Divine authority which accompanied the demand for the emancipation of the Hebrew slaves. And for a while they succeeded, at least to the satisfaction of Pharaoh. Such is their part in the story; not very creditable to their memory, yet not altogether without a parallel in modern times.

Fifteen hundred years before the coming of Christ into the world, when the revelation of God and of duty which we have in the Bible, had hardly begun to be given to mankind, it was not so easy as it is now to produce in any mind a strong conviction that the infinite power, which sways the universe, recognizes and will vindicate what are now known throughout the civilized world as the "inalienable rights" of human nature. Moses could not argue with Pharaoh out of the Bible; for there was no Bible then. He could not argue from the character of God revealed in Christ; for as yet Christ had not given himself a ransom for all. He could not appeal to the revealed law of God; for God had not then spoken from Sinai, nor written his Ten Commandments on tables of stone. He could not even appeal, as we now appeal, to those primitive cognitions of right which are God's law self-revealed in the human soul; for such an appeal is of little force till light from the Bible—light from God's commandments and from his glory in the face of Christ—has awakened the minds of men and quickened their instinctive moral sense. *Signs*, therefore, miraculous manifestations



of God's presence, were the appropriate arguments, when Moses demanded of Pharaoh, in God's name, the emancipation of the Israelites. Signs, such as Moses exhibited, were the fit method of producing in the minds of the Egyptian king and people the conviction that the great power of the universe was hostile to that oppression under which their Hebrew slaves were groaning. But in these days we have *arguments* as the most appropriate and effective signs. We have arguments against which Pharaoh never had the opportunity of hardening his heart. We have the argument from this very story of Pharaoh's conflict with the God of the oppressed—the argument from his overthrow and his immortal infamy. We have arguments from the precepts and commandments of the Bible; arguments from the great doctrines of the Christian revelation; arguments from the character of Christ, and the aim and purpose of his coming; arguments from all the history and working of Christianity in the world, and from the awakened and enlightened moral sense of Christian nations; arguments from the whole science of human rights and duties, and of society and government, as illustrated by Christianity and wrought out under its influence; arguments from all history, as read by the light of revelation, without which history has no meaning; arguments from God's providence compelling nature itself to testify for freedom. Against such signs as these, Jannes and Jambres, with their incantations and their sleight-of-hand, could do nothing. Not tricks of jugglery, but tricks of sophistry—not seeming miracles, but seeming arguments—are what the Pharaohs of to-day require. To them the Bible—the completed Bible with its light and power in all the realms of human thought—is what the wonder-working rod of Moses was to their great prototype. That they may the more easily and the more completely harden their hearts, they need men to perform the part of Jannes and Jambres, with variations suited to the times. They need men to “resist the truth” with logical legerdemain. And their wise men and their sorcerers come at their call. Sermons, speeches, epistles, pamphlets, newspaper essays, unreadable novels, ponderous tomes of solemn nonsense, have been indited and printed by the ton, to help

the modern Pharaohs harden their hearts against the conviction that the system which takes away from innocent men their inalienable rights, and establishes a trade in living human flesh, is wrong.

Of that sophistry, the sermon which has been circulated in this community is an instance. I have nothing to say which should be understood as implying that the author does not himself believe all that he would have his hearers believe, or that he is not imposed upon by his own sophistry. Nothing is more probable than that he is himself deluded by the arguments which he uses. It is not impossible that, among the magicians of Egypt, there were some who verily thought that they were in the right in the controversy with Moses, and that what they were able to do with their enchantments was a valid and sufficient refutation of the claim in God's name for the emancipation of the Hebrew bondmen. Our concern is not with the moral character of the man, but with the logical character of his arguments. He may be very much in earnest, and at the same time very much in the wrong. He may think he is doing God service, while he is in fact resisting the truth and encouraging men to make void the commandments of God.

I proceed, then, to point out the leading fallacies of the discourse—the sophisms or tricks of logic which may make it seem like argument; and if in dealing with them, I refer distinctly to the author or preacher of the discourse, let it be remembered that I use that form of speech only for convenience's sake, and not for the purpose of branding him with the guilt or dishonor of intentional deception. I know almost nothing of him, beyond what appears on the face of the printed sermon. To his own Master let him stand or fall.

1. The main fallacy of the discourse is that from first to last it *argues a false issue*. Let me ask any man who has read it, What is the object of that discourse?—what the impression or conviction which the preacher of it intended to be produced in the mind of the hearer? For what purpose has it been so diligently and so widely circulated? I hazard nothing in saying that the object at which that sermon aims, the purpose for which it was printed and circulated in various

forms—the purpose for which it was printed here—is simply this: to make you believe that *the system of slavery now existing in the United States* is not wrong in the light of the Bible, nor wrong in the sight of God; and that, therefore, all opposition to the indefinite extension of that slavery by the legislation of our common country, is unreasonable. But how does it undertake to produce that impression and belief? Does it fairly meet and argue the question whether this American slavery, with which you and I have to do as citizens, is just and right? It rather argues that a certain mode of opposition to slavery—a certain position or doctrine which it calls “abolitionism”—is wrong. Do you see the fallacy? What that preacher defines as abolitionism may be wrong, and yet it may be my duty and yours to protest in every reasonable way against the slavery now existing in some of these States, and to stand firm and fearless against every attempt to make *that* slavery a national institution.

2. In close connection with this main fallacy, another trick of logic—as much a trick as any sleight-of-hand that ever was performed by Egyptian or Oriental juggler—runs through the whole performance. There is no better word to juggle with in these times than the word *abolition*, with its derivatives *abolitionist* and *abolitionism*; for the reason that these words have so many gradations of meaning, and the writer or speaker who uses them can so easily pass from one meaning of them to another without being detected by careless readers or hearers, and perhaps without being himself conscious of the trick. You know that the words are used by many at the present day with a deliberate dishonesty of purpose—as when public men are charged with being “abolitionists,” it being intended that the charge shall be understood not in the sense in which it is true, but in some other vague and odious sense in which it is not true.

What is the abolition of slavery? It is a certain change in the laws of a slaveholding State or kingdom—a change by which “slavery or involuntary servitude, otherwise than in the punishment of crime,” having formerly existed in that State or kingdom, is extinguished. The method and the form of such

a change are not essential to the thing. Slavery may be abolished either gradually or instantaneously. It may be abolished either by a prospective law providing for the freedom of those not yet born, or by a law to protect the rights and redress the wrongs of the living generation. It may be abolished by an act which shall take effect at some future day, or by an act which shall take effect at once. It may be abolished either by a single decree of the sovereign power, dissolving instantaneously all legal ties between the masters and the slaves, or by a series of enactments recognizing one right of the enslaved after another, and making one provision after another for their protection and their elevation, till they shall be brought up to the level of entire freedom. It may be abolished by the force of Christian ideas and the growth of a Christian sense of justice, pervading the public mind and controlling the progress of legislation, or it may be abolished by the violence of conquest, or the exigencies of revolution and of civil war. The substitution of freedom for slavery by any process whatever, so that slavery shall cease to be, is "abolition." Every man who holds the doctrine that slavery ought to be abolished—whatever his particular judgment may be about the method and process of righting the great wrong—is, in the proper meaning of the word, an "abolitionist." In that meaning of the word, you and I are abolitionists, as Wilberforce was and the Macaulays, the illustrious father and more illustrious son—as our predecessors in these pulpits and churches were almost a century ago—as the State of Connecticut was when she framed and ordained a statute for the abolition of slavery, and still is—as all these States are, whose laws abhor the idea of slavery—as all the most illustrious personages of our revolutionary history were, not only in New England, but out of it,—Jay, Hamilton, Jefferson, Franklin, LaFayette, and Washington. But the author of the sermon which so many of you have had the opportunity of reading, uses the words "abolitionist" and "abolitionism" in a juggling and delusive fashion, from first to last. There is a class of agitators in this country, who hold not the simple doctrine of abolition, (namely, that slavery ought to be abolished,) but a distinctive and peculiar doctrine of their own, the doc-

trine of *immediate abolition*, or, in other words, that, instead of some process of gradual abolition, which shall guard the slaves and the masters and society against the perils incident to so great a change, slavery ought to be abolished instantaneously and without regard to consequences. Their doctrine of immediate abolition at all hazards, involves them in the necessity of maintaining that all slaveholding, in whatever circumstances, under whatever limitations, and for whatever temporary purposes, is sinful. I hold that slavery ought to be abolished. I hold that the enslaving of innocent persons is essentially unjust. But I do not therefore hold that doctrine of immediate abolition. For thirty years, those agitators have known me as their antagonist; and they have attempted to stigmatize me and thousands of better men as "pro-slavery." Their doctrine is a mischievous one—mischievous in its effects on their own minds and hearts, and mischievous in the reaction which it produces—mischievous in the system of agitation which they use for the propagation of it, and mischievous in the bewildering sophistries with which they attempt to defend it. But even their doctrine, in its most extravagant statement, is not so contrary to the genius and spirit of the Bible, as is the doctrine which that sermon undertakes to instill into your mind; and the noisy arrogance with which they denounce as "pro-slavery" all who will not accept their formula and follow their leaders, is transcended by the quiet sophistry which dexterously assumes that there is and can be no other doctrine of abolition—no other opposition to slavery on moral grounds—than that of the immediate-abolitionists.

3. Another sophism of the same sort runs through that discourse and lurks in every argument by which the preacher would bring you to his way of thinking about the great practical question of the hour. What is the question of the hour—the question which agitates the nation—the question on which that sermon was supposed to bear when it was put into your hands for the purpose of influencing your judgment? It is this: Whether the slavery which is the basis of society in some of these States, shall be recognized as a national

institution, to be endowed with national territory and maintained by national power—whether new securities for its perpetuation and ascendancy, and for the extension of it over regions not yet polluted by the footsteps of a slave, shall be incorporated into our federal legislation and into the constitution of the Union. Remembering this, observe how adroitly that preacher assumes, and how quietly he would lead you to admit, without a suspicion, that if *any kind* of servitude could ever be tolerated even temporarily, then this *American slavery* is not wrong. Look at his argument from the laws of Moses. Admit, if you please—what we might contradict and disprove—that his quotations are fairly made, and that his statements in exposition of them are true;—what then? In the time of Moses, and always down to a comparatively recent period, all captives taken in war were slaves. They were enemies, and being captured, were considered justly liable to slavery or to death, as with us a captured burglar or highway robber is considered justly liable to a term of imprisonment and hard labor in the penitentiary. Moses legislating for the Hebrews, under divine guidance, and giving them such laws as the “hardness of their hearts” would permit them to endure, did not immediately and absolutely abolish slavery, but hedged it in with limitations and restrictions which were little else than a method of gradual abolition. You know, and the author of that sermon knows, and the men who put that sermon before you in its printed form to influence your judgment, know, that if the laws of Moses in regard to slavery were established in our territories, not a slave would ever be carried into one of them, except with the expectation of his becoming free; and that if those laws were substituted for the existing laws on the same subject, in the slaveholding States, slavery itself would ere long cease to be.\* Look at that argument from the New Testament Scriptures. Doubtless slavery existed everywhere in those times, as it did in the time of Moses; for slavery, in some form, is always and everywhere an inevitable incident of war, till the progress of the law of nations, under

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\* Appendix, Note A.

the influence of Christianity, provides some other way of dealing with captives. Doubtless neither Christ nor his Apostles taught any doctrine of immediate abolition. But what did they teach? Did they teach anything from which it can be inferred that the main principle of Roman slavery—which was the same thing with the main principle of the slavery now existing in these States—is right? Doubtless there were “believing masters” in the primitive churches, as well as believing slaves. Doubtless the relation of master and servant, with the reciprocal duties which it included, was not dissolved by the water of baptism. But the question is: What was that relation, as recognized in those apostolic churches? What was the relation which a “believing master” might hold to those who, in the days of his ignorance and unbelief, had been his property in the same sense and by the same tenure with his oxen and his sheep? What law was it that was paramount in the church—the law of Cæsar, or the law of Christ?—the law of violence and terror, or the law of love?—the law of reluctant service enforced by stripes and the dread of being sold to a slave-trader, or the law that “the laborer is worthy of his hire?” The moment a master became a Christian, and was recognized as a citizen in the new “kingdom of God,” he became subject in every relation to the law of that kingdom. No matter how many slaves he had, nor how absolute his power, the moment he became a Christian, his rights and his duties as a master were defined by the precepts of Christ and the teachings of the Apostles, and not by the law of Rome. Those slaves were no longer his chattels to be used or to be sold at his convenience or at his caprice; they were his neighbors, poor and afflicted,—as the man who had fallen among thieves was neighbor to the good Samaritan. The law of Christ to him in that relation was, “Whatsoever thou wouldst that men should do to thee, do thou even so to them.” The teaching of the Apostles to him was, “Give to thy servant that which is just and equal;” and when one of those servants had become a partaker of the same precious faith, the teaching of the Apostles to that master concerning that servant was, “Receive him not now as a servant, but above a

servant, a brother beloved." Such is the slavery, if you choose to call it so, which can exist under the law of Christ, as given in the New Testament. Suppose the principles and precepts of the New Testament touching the relation of master and servant, and touching the dignity and worth of the lowliest and least of human souls, were incorporated into the slave code of our slaveholding States;—how far, think you, would such a change fall short of the abolition of slavery?\*" Beware then of the juggle, when the author of that sermon fixes your attention on the fact that a certain sort of servitude was tolerated in the Hebrew commonwealth, under certain laws of Moses bounding and restraining it, and on the fact that a certain relation of master and servant, in the Christian commonwealth, was recognized by the Apostles—and then quietly, and with an air of perfect simplicity, assumes that this American slavery in the nineteenth century of the Christian era—this slavery with the barracoons of Richmond and New Orleans—this slavery which breeds human beings to be sold in distant markets, as they breed horses in Vermont, and cattle on the prairies—this slavery with a slave trade which has swept more than ten thousand wretched victims within the last twelve months, from the one State of Virginia, to toil, not for wages, but under the coercion of the lash, in the cane-brakes and cotton fields of regions farther South—is all right.

4. Another sophism which vitiates all the argument of that discourse, is closely related to the one which I have just been exposing. The author—like the most indiscriminating of the immediate-abolitionists—confounds, persistently, the very obvious and not very difficult distinction between *slavery* and *slaveholding*. How obvious is it, that a man may be the master—the legal protector and employer, the lawful governor and patron—of a servant whom the law regards as a slave, and that he may be in that sense the owner of that slave, and therefore in law and in the legitimate use of language, a slaveholder, while yet in his heart he abhors the wickedness of slavery, and in word and deed protests against it. A slaveholder is not to be condemned for having the legal power of doing wrong, but

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\* Appendix, Note B.



only for the specific wrong of which he may be actually convicted. It may be that he is diligently and conscientiously giving to his slaves, according to his best light and knowledge, and to the limit of his power, that which is just and equal. Much as I abhor the juggling logic of immediate-abolitionists, which imputes to every slaveholder, in whatever circumstances, all "the sin of slavery," I abhor still more the legerdemain—worthy of Jaunes and Jambres and their troop—which undertakes to justify slavery, not only in the abstract, but in the concrete horrors of this Africo-American slavery, and to bless it in the name of the Lord, because, forsooth, the *holding* of slaves is not a crime in all circumstances and under all limitations and conditions. The question with which we have to do *as citizens*, is not a question about the moral responsibility of individual slaveholders in one case and another, nor about the consistency of *slaveholding*, in some sense, with a Christian profession. It is only a question about the moral character of this particular and well known system of *slavery* which we are expected to nationalize: whether it is consistent with the first principles of justice revealed to our moral nature by the word of God in the law and in the gospel.\*

5. I will detain your patience only while I point out one more of the sophistries which enter into the argument of that discourse. The author purposely and elaborately confounds the distinction between the great crime of holding and treating a human being as property, and that obvious and unquestioned property which every human being has of right in the affection and the free service of those with whom he is connected in the natural relations of society. You know that you have a property in your wife, in your children, in your apprentice, in the man who has entered into a contract to perform a certain service for you, and that they, in a like manner, have a property in you. But are *they*, therefore, your property, or *you* theirs? You have a property in the skill, the sagacity and the kindness of the physician whom you employ when sickness comes into your family; but *he* is not your property. You have a property in

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\* Appendix, Note C.

the learning, the ingenuity, the integrity and the eloquence of the lawyer whom you retain, to manage your suit; but have you any idea that the lawyer himself is your property? You have a property in your pastor, but you do not therefore own him as a part of your real or personal estate, nor does the parish own him. You have a property in the judges and magistrates of the State, for they owe you the service of protecting your rights; but they are not your chattels. The people of the United States have a property in the President; but they do not own him as property, either severally or jointly. You know, and everybody (not excepting the author of that sermon) knows, that the idea of *such* property in your fellow-men, bears no resemblance or analogy to the idea of holding a fellow-man as property, in the sense in which slaves are held as chattels under the laws of our slave States. Yet see with what elaborate sophistry that sermon undertakes to confound so plain a distinction:

“‘Domestic slavery,’ says Dr. Wayland, in his work on Moral Science, ‘supposes at best that the relation between master and slave is not that which exists between man and man, but is a modification at least of that which exists between man and the brutes.’ Do not these abolitionist philosophers know that according to the laws of every civilized country on earth, a man has property in his children, and a woman has property in her husband? The statutes of the State of New York, and of every other Northern State, recognize and protect this property, and our courts of Justice have repeatedly assessed its value. If a man is killed on a railroad, his wife may bring suit and recover damages for the pecuniary loss she has suffered. If one man entice away the daughter of another, and marry her while she is still under age, the father may bring a civil suit for damages for the loss of that child’s services, and the pecuniary compensation is the only redress the law provides. Thus the common law of Christendom and the statutes of our own State recognize property in man. In what does that property consist? Simply in such services as a man or a child may properly be required to render. This is all that the Levitical law, or any other law, means when it says, ‘Your bondmen shall be your possession or property, and an inheritance for your children.’ The property consists, not in the right to treat the slave like a brute, but simply in a legal claim for such services as a man in that position may properly be required to render. And yet abolitionists, in the face of the divine law, persist in denouncing the very relation of master and slave, ‘as a modification at least, of that which exists between man and the brutes.’”

Now let me read in connection with this an advertisement

from a recent newspaper printed in one of the States of this Union. The advertisement is not an extraordinary one, for you can hardly open a newspaper from that part of our country without seeing many such:

**B**Y virtue of an order of the Court of Ordinary of Jones county, Georgia, will be sold on the first Tuesday in January next, within the lawful hours of sale, at Clinton, before the Court House door, in said county, about eighty (80) Negro Slaves, all young men and women and children, very likely and valuable; consisting of valuable house servants and mechanics, among them blacksmiths. Said negroes are excellent plantation hands. The property belongs to the estate of John Fowles, late of Jones county, deceased. Sold for the benefit of the heirs and creditors of said deceased. The terms of the sale will be on a credit, and more particularly to be made known at the time and place of sale.

M. M. MILLS, Adm'r.

November 10th, 1860.

On the first Tuesday in January next—that is, day after to-morrow, the new year's day—those eighty “young men, women and children” are to be sold, singly or in lots. One by one they are to mount the block or table, that purchasers may have a fair opportunity of inspecting the articles for sale. What the purchasers are to bid for, is not merely a certain definite debt which the negroes are to pay in service—as you might buy a claim against a laboring man with the expectation that he will pay it in labor—or as you might buy a claim against a physician with the expectation that he will pay it in medical attendance on your family—or as you might buy a claim against a painter with the expectation that he will pay for it by painting a landscape or portrait to your order. No. What those competing purchasers are to bid for “at Clinton, before the Court House door,” day after to-morrow, is human flesh with the human soul that gives it life and strength—the entire manliness of those young men—the entire womanhood of those young women—all the winning and helpless pliability and all the human capability of those young children. If there is among those “valuable mechanics” one to whom God has given the genius of an inventor, that Divine endowment will be the absolute property of the fortunate purchaser—as much so as the strength and swiftness of his horse, or the keen scent and sagacity of his dog. If there is among those young women

one with a capability of song like that of the "Black Swan," or like that of the "Swedish Nightingale," the valuable gift, when discovered and developed, will not be her's, but her owner's. Or if there is among them a delicate quadroon or octo-roon, on whose fair cheek the blush of womanly feeling comes and goes, and whose slight form, fashioned for gracefulness and not for strength, will wilt and die in the cotton field,—not her poor strength for labor only, but her beauty, with all its attractiveness, is to be sold for money. Such ownership of human beings is *the essential thing* in the system of slavery now existing in our slave States. Before the paramount right of the owner to his human chattel, the property of the husband in his wife, and the property of the wife in her husband, the property of the father in his children, and the property of the children in the father, are all annihilated. In the eye of the slave law, the slave, being himself owned by his master, can be the owner of nothing. Even the rags which cover his nakedness are not his, but his owner's. You know all this, and the author of that sermon knows it too.

Who is it, then, that speaks the exact truth; and who is it that shuffles and prevaricates with a juggling sophism? The excellent and venerable Dr. Wayland, whom the author of that sermon calls an "abolitionist philosopher,"—or the author himself, who tries to make you believe that because slaves are not chattels under the law of God, therefore they are not chattels under the law of the slave States? Does that man deal honestly with his hearers and his readers? Does he deal honestly with himself?

If, now, you will read that sermon again, bearing in mind the exposure which you have seen of its leading and essential fallacies, you will find the whole argument falling to pieces as you read. I might dwell on its successive topics or "*theses*," if there were time, but I need not. It will be enough to advert to his last proposition for one moment.

He says that "Abolitionism is the chief cause of all the strife that agitates, and the danger that threatens our country." "Abolitionism," he tells you, not slavery, is the evil that disturbs the peace, and threatens the existence of our Union.

You need not hold him to his definition here. You need not inquire whether he affirms this of "abolitionism" in the narrow, technical and abusive sense which his definition gives, or in that large, and true, and honorable sense which it has in history. In either of these meanings, or in any intermediate sense, the affirmative is notoriously untrue, unless it be admitted—as he would have you admit—that this "chattel slavery," as it has been called, with the traffic in human flesh which is essential to it, is a righteous and innocent thing. Admit that this "chattel slavery"—for there is no practical question about any other, whether Mexican peonage, Russian serfdom, or Mosaic servitude—is all right; and you admit that they who object to its being made a national institution, are to be blamed for whatever agitation may be the consequence. Admit that this "chattel slavery," which our fathers excluded from the Constitution—avoiding by the most wary circumlocution, not the word only, but every recognition of the idea—ought to be nationalized by judicial interpolation, by legislative and executive usurpation, or by amendment of the Constitution; and you admit that any opposition to all this, by word or deed, is the blameable cause of the ensuing agitation and peril. But if this "chattel slavery" is wrong—if your own moral sense, and the moral sense of Christendom, quickened and enlightened by the Bible, condemn it with a just abhorrence, who is to be blamed for the existing agitation? Is Christ to be blamed that his coming into the world brings not peace but a sword? Who is responsible for the fact that this question of the extension and nationalization of slavery has become the grand question in the political agitations of our country? More than forty years ago, after a great conflict caused by a temporary departure from the original policy of our government, the destiny of all the unorganized territories then belonging to the Union, was fixed by an act which, though not satisfactory to the opponents of slavery, was accepted as irrevocable. Was it "abolitionism" that procured the annexation of Texas, and the subsequent conquest of Mexican provinces? Was it "abolitionism" which insisted on re-establishing in those conquered provinces the slavery which had been abolished there by Mexi-

can law? Was it "abolitionism" which swept away the great "landmark of freedom," after it had stood unquestioned for the third part of a century? Was it "abolitionism" that attempted to force slavery into Kansas by an unparalleled combination of the meanest fraud and the most atrocious violence? Is it "abolitionism" which to-day is openly levying war against the United States, seizing forts and arsenals, and conspiring far and wide for the subversion of our national existence? Impute what blame you will to the immediate abolitionists—ascrbe what efficiency you will to their methods of agitation—and when you have done your utmost in that direction, the fact will nevertheless remain, incapable of denial or concealment, that the questions which within the last fifteen years have agitated Congress and the country, could never have been raised but for the attempts which have been so persistently made to extend and nationalize the institution of slavery as it exists under the laws of our slaveholding States. Is it possible that the author of that discourse does not know what the questions are which are rocking the continent?\*

The concluding portion of our text gives us a thought to which we have not yet adverted, but which is too pertinent, and too important, to be passed over without notice. Jannes and Jambres were successful for a while, and to a certain extent, in the practice of their jugglery; but there was a limit beyond which they could not go. The power of God—the power of great laws which God has established in the universe, was against them and they failed. When Aaron's rod was transformed into a living serpent, the magicians made a show of doing likewise; and Pharaoh's heart was hardened. When the Nile, smitten by the prophet's rod, grew turbid, and its waters reddened into blood, the wise men and the sorcerers could get up a tricky imitation of the awful prodigy; and Pharaoh's heart was hardened. When the plague of frogs, with its disgusting horror, came over the land, the magicians, with their incantations and their paltry tricks made out a seeming demonstration that the power of their gods was equal to

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\* Appendix, Note D.

the same achievement ; and Pharaoh's heart was hardened. But Jannes and Jambres could proceed no farther. At the horror of the next great plague, they cried out, baffled and dismayed, "This is the finger of God." But it was too late. While, on the one hand, they could proceed no farther, on the other hand, they could not undo the effect which their former incantations and tricks has wrought in the mind of the king. Still "Pharaoh's heart was hardened," and the conflict between the sovereignty of Egypt and the sovereignty of God went forward to its end. So will it be with those who are performing the part of Jannes and Jambres in these modern times, with the variations which the times require. Up to a certain limit they may seem to be successful, and the great power of oppression may delight to honor them. But when that limit shall have been attained, "they shall proceed no farther." In due time, as the long conflict between the oppressor and the God who pities the oppressed goes forward, "their folly will be manifest to all men," as the folly of Jannes and Jambres was exposed in Egypt. Think you that God's purposes of justice and of love will be baffled, that his pity for the wronged will be blinded or turned to indifference, or that his sure word of prophecy will be made of none effect, by these juggling defenses of African slavery? No! sure as the word of God which is settled forever in the heavens—sure as the march of the stars in their courses—is God's purpose and promise to fill the earth with the glory and blessedness of Christ's kingdom in the hearts of men. In the majestic progress of God's providence, the hour is coming when the renewed and rejoicing earth shall nowhere be afflicted with the presence of a slave. The long conflict in this country between instituted wrong and eternal right, between slavery and freedom, between the power of the oppressor and the God of the oppressed, can have only one termination. Slavery will be abolished. From the icy head-springs of the father of waters to the "land of flowers," there will be no law but the law of freedom. On all our plains and hills, and along all our streams, industry will be free ; and freedom will be strength and riches. Then, when the great conflict shall have ended, when justice shall have triumphed over wrong,

when God's jubilee shall have "proclaimed liberty throughout all the land, to all the inhabitants thereof," and no human being shall evermore be held as the chattel of another—nay, earlier than the final and consummate victory, and while Pharaoh may still be hardening his heart in the hope that though his magicians have failed, the gods of Egypt shall yet prevail against the God of Moses and of Israel—how infamous will these juggling defenses of chattel slavery have become!

But the question, be it remembered—the practical question with which you have to do—is not whether slavery shall be abolished, nor when, nor how; but whether this chattel slavery shall be extended and nationalized. Think what the extension of slavery means. It means not merely that black men shall be transported into our territories and labor there without wages, and that the master's right to their uncompensated services shall be enforced by our national power. It means the indefinite extension of that entire state of society which is inseparable from the existence of slavery, and which at this moment is a perpetual reign of terror in so large a portion of our common country. Some of us heard a few evenings ago, from the eminent and excellent Professor Mitchell, his startling description of how narrowly he escaped, on a recent occasion, the peril of being hanged by a mob of barbarians, at the suggestion of a half insane and half drunken ruffian, and how not an individual in the railway train dared lift a finger or lip a syllable in his defense. His testimony was the more impressive because he did not seem to see the bearing of it, or to apprehend at all the question of the time. The question is whether you will consent to the indefinite extension of that state of society over all the territories now in possession of our government, and all that may hereafter be acquired. The slave-trader may complain that without a national protection for slavery he cannot carry his human merchandise into the territories to sell it there; the slave owner may complain if you do not consent that he shall drive his human cattle thither, and hold them and treat them as cattle there; but have not I as good a right to go into those territories as they have? Have not I as good a right to my thought and the free utterance of it, as the slave



owner has to his slave property? Have not I in all the territories as good a right to utter, by voice and pen, by speech and by the press, my moral sense and the moral sense of Christendom, as the slave trader has to advertise and sell his slaves? The question is not merely between the emancipation and the continued bondage of certain black men, if carried into the territories against their will. It is a question between liberty and slavery in the broadest sense. It is the question whether white men shall be free—whether the press shall be free—whether the pulpit and the Church shall be free—whether the Word of God shall be free—whether the knowledge and use of letters shall be free—whether speech in the intercourse of neighbors and in the conversation of fellow travelers on the highways and thoroughfares shall be free—whether thought itself shall be free. That is the question with which you have to do, under your responsibility to God for your posterity and for your country. On that question let every freeman stand firm, faithful and fearless in the love of right, and in the confidence that God will do all things well.

# APPENDIX.

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*Note A, page 14.*

THE disingenuousness—for I can hardly call it less—of the argument adduced from the Hebrew law in vindication of American slavery, is evident to any man who will take the trouble to remember that the same argument may be urged, with precisely the same force, in vindication of the Mormon polygamy. The law which God gave to the Israelites by Moses did not prohibit polygamy, but recognized it as an existing institution, and regulated and sustained it. It did not peremptorily take away the right of arbitrary divorce, which every husband had by ancient usage; it only limited that right, and put it under restraint. So of other barbarous usages, particularly that of private and personal vengeance for homicide.

Doubtless the argument from the law of Moses is valid against those who hold that slavery ought to be abolished *immediately* and without regard to consequences; but the question is whether it is valid as a defense of the negro slavery which we are concerned with as citizens of the United States.

In the sermon by Rev. H. J. Van Dyke of Brooklyn, purporting to discuss “the character and influence of Abolitionism,” two passages are quoted from Leviticus xxy, and are represented as a portion of “that law which God promulgated amid the solemnities of Sinai.” The Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church (in which body Mr. Van Dyke is a minister) distinguishes, carefully and correctly, between “the moral law,” the “ceremonial laws,” and the “judicial laws” of the Mosaic system. (Confession of Faith, Chapter xix.) According to that authority, “the MORAL law doth forever bind all to the obedience thereof,” and is that “perfect rule of righteousness” which “was *delivered by God upon Mount Sinai* in ten commandments;” the “CEREMONIAL laws are now abrogated under the New Testament;” and the “JUDICIAL laws,” being those which were given to the people of Israel “as a body politic,” “expired with the state of that people, not obliging any other, now, further than the general equity thereof may require.” What, then, is Mr. Van Dyke thinking of, when he attempts to bewilder the minds of his hearers and readers by introducing quotations from the “judicial laws”—the political and civil code peculiar to the Hebrew commonwealth—in those distinctive terms of reverence which his own Church, in common with all intelligent and honest theologians, applies exclu-

sively to the immutable and universal law, the "perfect rule of righteousness," given in God's "Ten Commandments?"

Remembering, then, that Mr. Van Dyke's quotations are from a body of laws under which polygamy and concubinage were no crimes, and every husband might dismiss wife or concubine at his own discretion—and under which the nearest of kin to a man who had been killed, even without malice aforethought, by another, was expected to take immediate and bloody vengeance without any judicial inquiry, unless the homicide should succeed in escaping to one of the six cities of refuge, and should remain there till the death of the high priest—let us see what his quotations are; whether he sustains them fairly; and whether, under his own construction of them, they afford any justification or apology for *that* slavery with which we have to do.

The first of the two quotations is in these words:

"And if thy brother that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor and be sold unto thee; thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bond-servant; but as a hired servant and a sojourner he shall be with thee, and shall serve thee unto the year of jubilee, and then shall he depart from thee, both he and his children with him." Lev. xxv, 39, 40.

This is a provision forbidding any Israelite to be held otherwise than as a hired servant whose term of service was in no case to extend beyond the year of jubilee. It is a provision, in other words, that no Israelite shall in any case hold his brother Israelite as a slave. Mr. Van Dyke, in making this quotation, does not mention that in ordinary cases the period of service for an Israelite was limited to six years. Nor does he suggest that this law requiring all indentures to be canceled by the jubilee, is clearly additional and supplemental to the other law previously ordained, which provided that the time for which an Israelite might be held to service, whether for theft or by his own contract, should not exceed six years, unless, at the end of that period, he should voluntarily profess, before the judges, his desire to continue in the service of his master,—in which case his ear was to be pierced with an awl as a sign of his self-degradation, and he was to continue a servant to that master "forever," i. e., not for another term of seven years, but indefinitely. (Exodus xxi, 2-6.) The effect of the additional and supplementary law was two-fold. First, In no case was the Hebrew servant, described in the former law, to be regarded or treated as a slave, even for a term of years. Secondly, At the jubilee, every Hebrew servant, without exception, was to go free. Without exception, I say; for the later statute is to modify the earlier, and not the earlier the later. The word "forever," in the first law, is not used in the absolute sense, but only to indicate an indefinite time as distinguished from the definite term of seven years. Such a "forever" was of course limited by the death of either party; and when the law of the jubilee was given, the "forever" received a new limitation. The nature of the jubilee itself confirms this view. That institution was de-

signed to be a permanent agrarian law; or, if such a phrase seem infelicitous, call it a law to secure the inalienability of homesteads. Every fiftieth year, all real estate was to revert to the heirs of its original proprietors after the conquest. (Leviticus xxv, 8, *ss.*) If, then, the Hebrew servant, whose ear had been bored as a sign of his engagement to an indefinite time of service, was to return at the jubilee to the ancestral homestead and "possession" of his family, is it likely that *he* was excluded, as Mr. Van Dyke would have us believe, from the benignant provision of the law which said, "Ye shall hallow the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to ALL the inhabitants thereof?"

Yet, Mr. Van Dyke says that, under the law which he quotes relating to the "children of Israel who, by reason of poverty, were reduced to servitude," "it was their right to be free at the year of jubilee, unless they chose to remain in perpetual bondage, *for which case provision is made in other and distinct enactments.*" Does he read so carelessly as not to see that the provision made in those "other and distinct enactments," (see Exodus xxi, 2-6), has no relation at all to the case of any servant discharged by the jubilee, but only to the case of a servant whose *six years* term of service has expired, and who, having no ancestral "possession" to which he may return as yet, and no faculty of earning his living in any other way, chooses to stay with his master for an indefinite time?

The other quotation made by Mr. Van Dyke, from the same chapter, is as follows:

"Both thy bondmen and thy bondmaids which thou shalt have shall be of the heathen that are round about you. Of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids. Moreover, of the children of strangers that do sojourn among you—of them shall ye buy and of their families that are with you, which they beget in your land, and they shall be your possession. And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them as a possession; they shall be your bondmen forever." Levit. xxv, 44-46.

He introduces this quotation by saying, "But not so with slaves of foreign birth. There was no year of jubilee provided for them. For what says the law?" Yet he is careful not to tell what the law of jubilee really says. "Ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and PROCLAIM LIBERTY THROUGHOUT ALL THE LAND UNTO ALL THE INHABITANTS THEREOF." (Ver. 10.) He is careful not to let his hearers or readers know that men as learned as he, and as honest, and with as true a reverence for the Scriptures, do believe that the proclamation of liberty to all the inhabitants of the land, at the jubilee, was for slaves of foreign birth as well as for the Hebrew servant. Their reasons for their interpretation of the law do not convince my mind, but they are honestly offered; and when he intimates that there is no other construction of the passage than that which he gives, and that everybody who does not accept his conclusion from it, rejects the authority of the Bible, I cannot admire his candor.

Mr. Van Dyke's construction of the passage depends partly on the word "forever," and partly on the suppression of certain clauses immediately connected with the distinction made by Moses between Hebrew and heathen servants. The jubilee-law, which he does not quote, required that liberty should be proclaimed throughout the land to ALL the inhabitants thereof; the passage which he does quote permitted servants who were not Israelites to be held as bondmen *forever*; and it is a reasonable question whether to limit the meaning of the "all" by the "forever," or the meaning of the "forever" by the "all." But Mr. Van Dyke ignores this question entirely, as if he had never read enough, nor heard enough, to be aware that there can be such a question. And beside this, his suppression of the clauses which immediately precede and follow the words quoted, enables him to give out the representation that the chief or only difference between the Hebrew servant and the servant of foreign birth, was in respect to the duration of the term of service. Perhaps it did not occur to him that the clauses which he omitted were of any particular significance. But read them, and see what their bearing is. There is no better way of showing what I mean than by transcribing the whole passage, and distinguishing to the eye of the reader those portions of it which Mr. Van Dyke considered unimportant :

"And if thy brother that dwelleth by thee waxen poor and be sold unto thee, thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bond-servant. But as a hired servant, and as a sojourner, he shall be with thee, and shall serve thee unto the year of jubilee. And then shall he depart from thee, both he and his children with him, [and shall return unto his own family, and unto the possession of his fathers shall he return. For they are my servants which I brought forth out of the land of Egypt: they shall not be sold as bondmen. Thou shalt not rule over him with rigor, but shalt fear thy God.] Both thy bondmen and thy bondmaids which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen that are round about you; of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids. Moreover of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that are with you which they begat in your land: and they shall be your possession. And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you to inherit them for a possession: They shall be your bondmen forever: [but over your brethren, the children of Israel, ye shall not rule over one another with rigor"].

Obviously, all this is one law on one subject; and the main intent and meaning of it is, that no Israelite should ever, in any circumstances, be held or treated as a bond-servant. The holding of foreigners as bondmen was not prohibited, inasmuch as the reason of the law ("for they are my servants whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt,") was not applicable to them. Indeed, till there began to be a Christian law of nations,—till slavery or death ceased to be the inevitable doom of captives taken in war—an absolute prohibition of slavery by any legislator, would have been inhuman, not to say impossible. The question, therefore, whether the proclamation of liberty through-

out the land, in the year of jubilee, was literally "to *all* the inhabitants thereof," is not so easily disposed of as Mr. Van Dyke seems to think, but must be determined by other considerations than the force of the word "forever," in this passage.

But if we concede to Mr. Van Dyke his own construction of the passages quoted by him from the "judicial laws" of Moses, the questions still remain, What sort of slavery do these passages justify? And is *that* slavery the same with the American slavery which his sermon was intended to vindicate?

I. The slavery which was tolerated in the Hebrew commonwealth, was the slavery of white men. The Israelites were white men; and so were all "the heathen round about them," and "the strangers that sojourn among them." Would it be right, then, for us to make slaves of the Indians on our own frontiers, and in Canada and Mexico, wherever a tribe can be found that is not yet Christianized? They are not, indeed, white men, like the Phenicians, and the Philistines, and the Syrians, but they are the only heathen that are round about us, unless we are bigoted enough to say that Roman Catholics are heathen,—in which case, Mexicans and Canadian Frenchmen might also be reckoned among the heathen that are round about us. As for the strangers that sojourn among us, would it be right for us to adopt that Hebrew law into our legislation, in regard to them? We have Irishmen, Germans, Poles, Jews, and strangers of many other names and races, sojourning among us. Why should we not apply, in their case, that Hebrew law which Mr. Van Dyke quotes so exultingly to justify the enslaving of Afro-Americans? "Of *them* shall ye buy, and of their families that are with you, which they beget in your land, and *they* shall be your possession, and ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you to inherit them as a possession: they shall be your bondmen forever." Irishmen and Germans come by thousands to sojourn among us. Why not tell them, in the name of democracy, that if, in the hardships incident to the condition of strangers in a strange land, any of them be "waxen poor," they shall be sold as "bondmen and bondmaids," and we who purchase will "take them as an inheritance for our children after us," and "they shall be our bondmen forever;" and that for all this there is a warrant in the Bible?

But under which of these two descriptions do the Afro-Americans come, whom it is proposed to introduce as slaves into our territories? They are not "of the heathen that are round about us;" for they profess the same religion with ourselves; and their heathen ancestors in the jungles of Africa, instead of being "round about us," were separated from us by more than the breadth of the Atlantic Ocean. They are not "strangers that do sojourn among us;" for they have been here these many generations, their ancestors never came hither

to sojourn, and thousands of them are kindred in blood to the race that enslaves them.

The passage, then, which Mr. Van Dyke quotes so triumphantly from the Mosaic code, does not go so far towards vindicating the slavery with which we have to do, as it would go toward vindicating a slavery which all men, save certain Southern politicians and "sociologists," would instantly denounce as most unjust and wicked. I have often heard the same quotation made for the same purpose by men much less intelligent than he.

II. There was a personal-liberty law incorporated into the slave-code of the Hebrew commonwealth. "He that stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death." (Exodus xxi, 16.) Did that law mean that the wretch who had stolen a man and sold him, had conveyed to the purchaser a valid title? If the man-stealer was to be put to death, was not the man stolen to go free? How many slaves in this country are held by any title which does not depend ultimately on the title conveyed by the African man-stealer to the slave-stealer? Think what conception and estimate of value of personal liberty, and of every man's right to own himself, is involved in that law. Is there a State of this Union in which the attempt to enslave a free person is punished with death? Does anybody propose to incorporate such a provision for the protection of personal liberty into "a slave-code for the territories"? Would not such a feature in a compromise be a most fascinating thing to the defenders and extenders of slavery?

III. The fugitive-slave law in the Mosaic code was a very different thing from the fugitive-slave law in the United States. Read it. "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee; he shall dwell with thee, even among you, in that place which he shall choose, in one of thy gates where it liketh him best; thou shalt not oppress him." (Exod. xxii, 16.) We are told that this relates only to the fugitive from a foreign jurisdiction. Granted:—but what then? This law prohibits forever any treaty with a foreign power for the mutual extradition of fugitives from slavery; and, on the "state-rights" theory of our Union, it would forbid that compact in the Federal constitution, which provides for the giving up of slaves who escape from the jurisdiction of one State into that of another. This law, making it impossible for a Philistine or Moabite gentleman to recover a slave who had escaped into the Hebrew territory, could not but be followed by retaliatory laws on the part of all the surrounding governments. Under this law, then, "the Canada line"—the line beyond which no master could legally pursue his fugitive slave—was no more than a day's journey distant from any portion of the land of Israel. Nor was this all. By the fugitive-slave law which Moses ordained in Israel, the great principle was

established that slavery, wherever it exists, is an institution purely local, the creature exclusively of municipal law, and that whenever the slave passes beyond the jurisdiction of the municipal law that enslaves him, he is to be regarded and treated as a freeman; the identical principle which is incorporated into the national law of Christendom, and which we are now required to repudiate in favor of the principle that the property of the slave-owner in his human cattle, is as much a matter of universal morality, and as completely sanctioned by the law of nature and of God, as the property of the New England farmer in his oxen.

IV. Slavery as tolerated in the Hebrew law, was modified by its connection with a recognized and legal polygamy. Polygamy, legal or illegal, is the inevitable concomitant of slavery as an institution in society. All history demonstrates this. Everybody knows it. The woman that falls into the possession of a man and is under his control as an article of his property, will be used by him as his wife or his concubine, if *he so chooses*. No law can hinder it but by taking the woman out of his power. In a Christian country, many a master may govern his passions by the Christian rule of chastity; but even in a Christian country, if slavery is widely diffused, the passions of man's depraved nature will be, in countless instances, too strong to be controlled by Christian principles or rules. I bring no railing accusation against the morals of our Southern States in this respect. It is enough to say that under the existing system (which we are required to establish in our territories) the chastity of more than a million and a half of women has no other protection than the mercy and the virtuous self-restraint of masters and overseers and masters' sons; and that let the condition of society there be, in this respect, as bad as it may, it can be no worse than what might reasonably be expected from the known impulses and tendencies of human nature. For this dreadful incident of slavery, which under the American system is wholly ignored in law, the oriental slavery has a rude alleviation, which Moses, in the wisdom by which he was guided, introduced into his slave-code. If a master chose to use his bondmaid as a concubine, she had a recognized place in his harem, like Hagar in the tent of Abraham, or like Bilhah and Zilpah in the family of Jacob, and was entitled to the rights of a wife. The children whom she bore to her master, though they were "the children of the bondwoman," were nevertheless free-born, with all the rights of children. Whoever is curious to see the law on this topic may read it for himself. (Dent. xxi, 10-17; Exod. xxi, 7-11.) How unlike is this to the slavery which we are concerned with! Is it not an impertinence, at the best, to quote the law of Moses in vindication of a system under which the slave woman who shares her master's bed and becomes the mother of his children, acquires no rights; and even the children in whose veins her blood is mingled



with that of her master, are born to a life of helpless bondage. Does Mr. Van Dyke think that the detestable principle of American slave law, "*Partus sequitur ventrem*," is written in the Bible?

V. The slavery which "the judicial laws" of Moses left in existence, was a slavery continually passing into freedom; while the slavery which we are expected to justify by that example, consigns the enslaved, and their posterity through all generations, to hopeless bondage. Our American slavery, in the full maturity of wickedness to which it has at last attained, abhors the idea of liberty for the captive. Under the system, as it now stands, no slave is encouraged to loyalty and fidelity by the hope of achieving freedom for himself or for his children. Its policy is that no master shall be permitted, for any consideration of love or justice, to emancipate a slave, though that slave be his son or his brother, his sister or his daughter, or the loved and faithful mother of his children. How different the slave code which was given to that rude and half-barbarous people in the desert? Under that system, there was no restraint on the emancipation of slaves by masters, and no restraint on the teaching of slaves. Not only was there to be once in fifty years a proclamation of "liberty throughout the land to all the inhabitants thereof;" but continually servants were becoming free—those of foreign birth as well as those that were of the stock of Israel. The inevitable polygamy incident to slavery, was made to increase the number of free-born children, as well as of emancipated women. And, besides all this, freedom was in some cases awarded to the slave for injuries inflicted by his master. In some of our States, if I remember correctly, the humanity of the law goes to the extent of providing that the slave whose master is too cruel, shall have the benefit of being sold to try his chance with some other owner. By the Hebrew law, on the other hand, if a servant had been maimed by his master, not only was the master punished by the loss of his slave, but the slave was compensated by being made free. (Exodus xxi, 26, 27.) So far as the tendency toward freedom is concerned, the two systems are wholly opposite to each other.

Let me be understood. I do not deny at all that the system which Moses tolerated and regulated was slavery; nor that it continued to be slavery after he had hedged it about with restraints. What I maintain is that slavery, as regulated by Moses, was a very different thing from slavery as we are concerned with it in the controversies and duties of to-day; so that even if we admit the perfect righteousness of the one, we cannot infer that the other is not infamously wicked. Wherever slavery exists and cannot be suddenly and peaceably abolished, I am willing that legislative power should deal with it precisely on the principle on which Moses dealt with it—the principle of mitigation and improvement, tending to emancipation and to abolition.

Mr. Van Dyke's argument may be summarily presented in the following series of propositions:

I. God, in the civil and political institutions which he gave to Israel by Moses, "sanctioned" slavery.

II. What God has "sanctioned" cannot be sinful.

III. Therefore slavery is not sinful.

IV. Therefore (as the hearers and readers of that sermon were expected to understand and apply the argument) the system of slavery which the people of the United States are required to nationalize and extend, being "sanctioned" of God, is not sinful; and any man who objects to it, is a blasphemer.

In this argument, as I have now shown, there is a double fallacy.

First, There is the juggle of quietly and adroitly confounding two very different things.

Secondly, There is the great and grave fault of pretending that because the civil and political laws which God gave to Israel by Moses, contain regulations about slavery and do not peremptorily abolish it, therefore God "sanctions" slavery. Let any man who acknowledges the authority of Christ's sermon on the mount, answer one question before he permits himself to be imposed upon by that pretense. Did Moses, with the authority of an inspired legislator, "sanction" as sinless, everything which his code did not prohibit and punish as criminal?

*Note B, page 16.*

The argument from the New Testament, in vindication of American slavery, is, if possible, more monstrous in its fallacy than the argument from the laws of Moses. Yet some men are puzzled by it. Mr. Van Dyke's statement of it differs in no way from the statements which have been often made by southern writers, and as often been refuted. Perhaps then I may be allowed to repeat in this place what I wrote and published fifteen years ago:

"How then (many an anti-slavery reader will be ready to ask) do I avoid the conclusion that the Bible warrants and sanctions slavery? How?—Simply by the all-sufficient consideration that the Bible, not being given to the world as a book of politics, and not undertaking at all to reform the world by prescribing forms of government, or by rectifying those political and civil relations which constitute the structure of society, seeks only to reconcile men to God, illuminating them from on high, and inspiring them one by one with principles of righteousness and love, and leaves the whole matter of civil and social improvement to the common sense of men thus enlightened and renewed. The fact that the Bible does not contradict the vulgar astronomy of the ages in which it was written, is impotent if urged against the demonstrations of Newton and Laplace. The fact that Jesus of Nazareth drafted no declaration of independence for Judea, is impotent as an argument against the self-evident truths of the American Revolution. The fact that Paul held no conventions, and uttered no protests, against the polit-

ical system, under which, in his days, the world was groaning, is impotent to prove that the Roman empire was not a system of outrage against right, and its history a history of inextinguishable robberies and slaughters. Even so the fact that Christ and his Apostles did nothing in the way of denunciation or direct interference to abolish the relation of master and slave, and to introduce the better system of free labor for wages in its stead, is equally impotent to prove that the enslaving of millions of human beings in these United States, and their conversion by law into mere chattels, robbed—so far as the state can rob them—of every human right, is not an atrocity fouler than the wrongs of Pharaoh against Israel, and worthy to be—as it is—the scorn and indignation of the world.

“If it is the slaveholder who asks me how I avoid the conclusion that the Bible warrants and sanctifies slavery, I return the question to him. I put the inquiry to Governor Hammond and his associates in the task of vindicating ‘the peculiar institutions’ of the South—Do you believe that the Bible warrants and sanctions the slavery which exists in South Carolina? Does your belief in the Christian religion require you to believe that the system which constitutes one-half of your human population mere merchandise—chattels—things incapable of suffering any injustice—is right before God, and ought to escape all censure from the moral sense of Christendom? Why? This is the only answer—Slavery existed in the Roman empire; the apostles admitted masters of slaves to communion in their churches; therefore, slavery was right then; therefore, slavery is right now, right in principle and right in the details? Do you *believe* this, Mr. Hammond? Then you believe that the slavery which the Apostles saw everywhere was right, for, in this argument, your belief that the slavery which now exists at Charleston is right, is only an inference from the righteousness of the slavery which existed eighteen hundred years ago at Antioch and at Rome. You believe that Christianity gave its Divine authority to sanction a system by which all captives in war were slaves in the hands of the captors, and were sold after a victory like sheep in the market;—a system which enslaved not negroes only but men of every complexion; not savages only but men of the most civilized races—the Jew with all the glory of his history and his hopes, the Greek with all the beauty of Apollo in his face and form, as well as the painted Briton or the fair-haired Saxon; not the degraded only, born and trained to drudgery, but the refined and cultivated, artists, poets, men of letters, as well as ‘field hands’ and ‘house servants.’ You believe that if Napoleon, when his armies were sweeping Europe, had brought back with him to Paris from each vanquished country, myriads of miserable captives to be sold as so much plunder, and among those myriads high-born ladies prized for their delicate and graceful beauty, nobles torn from their ancestral halls to be footmen on the carriages, and cup-bearers at the banquets of the victors, artists from the academies and scholars from the universities, as well as mechanics from the towns and laborers from the fields—that slavery would have had its warrant from the precepts of the gospel.\* To bring the argument nearer home—you believe that if, in the contingencies of another conflict with Great Britain, your State should fall for a time into the power of the enemy, and the prisoners, hurried to the ships from your cities and plantations, should be transported to London and sold there as you sell negroes, your wives and daughters for seamstresses and chambermaids and children’s nurses, your judges and senators for attorneys’ clerks, your merchants and bankers for book-keepers and household stewards, your men of literature and science for private tutors, and your sporting gentlemen for grooms and dog-whippers—Christianity would warrant and sanction the sale, and would rivet the chains forever upon the limbs of all your chivalry. No! you do *not* believe that the gospel of the Anointed One, who came to preach glad tidings to the poor, deliverance to the captive, and the opening of the prison doors to them that are bound, is the warrant of negro slavery; and you deceive none but yourselves when you say so.” *Slavery Discussed in Occasional Essays*, pp. 184–186.

\* This argument from the character of Roman slavery, and this particular illustration, are presented with great force (if I remember aright what I read ten years ago) by Dr. Channing. I would have used his language rather than my own, if his little work on slavery had been, at the time of writing, within my reach.”

*Note C, page 17.*

The text of Mr. Van Dyke's sermon is good against men who hold that Christianity effects an immediate dissolution of the relation between a master and persons held to service under the laws of a State. But when he undertakes to apply the denunciation of that text to all those who hold that the system of slavery with which we have to do in this country, is a violation of the law of God, revealed alike in nature and the Bible, he "wrests the Scripture," and if I may retort upon him his own phrase, "he blasphemeth the word of God and his doctrine."

The text in question is, I Tim. vi, 1-5 :

"Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort. If any man teach otherwise and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself."

The first sentence relates to Christian servants that were "under the yoke;" the second, to those in particular who had "believing masters." Would Mr. Van Dyke have us believe that there was no difference in the condition and relations of those who are thus distinguished? In the second sentence, the text assumes two very noticeable things: *first*, that the relation between the Christian servant and his Christian master was essentially modified by their brotherhood in the church, so that the service was to be rendered willingly and in love; and, *secondly*, that the believing masters were, as it is phrased in our translation, "*partakers of the benefit*." If the author of that sermon had studied his text, he would have found that the word translated "partakers" is the same verb which is translated, in Luke i, 54, "he hath *holpen*," and in Acts xx, 35, "*to support*;" and that it is certainly very far from suggesting the thought which seems to have been, at this place, in the mind of King James's translators, viz., that the master was partner with the servant in the benefit of salvation by Christ. He would also have seen that the word translated "benefit," being the same which, in Acts iv, 9, is translated a "*good deed done*," and being closely related to that which is used when it is said of our Saviour, (Acts x, 38,) that he "went about *doing good*," has a meaning which his great authority, McKnight, seems not to have observed—a meaning as far as possible from the conception of service rendered by a bondman. The word signifies, not merely a "benefit," but rather a *benefaction*, including

the benevolent motive. "Let not the believing servants think lightly of their believing masters because they and their masters are on the same level of brotherhood in the church, but serve them the more because they who receive the benefaction—the free gift of that willing service—are believers and beloved."

Was there, then, no difference between "as many servants as were under the yoke," and "those who had believing masters?" Call both classes slaves if you will, but was the relation of a slave under the yoke to a heathen master the same thing with the relation of a Christian slave to a master who had also become a Christian? Was the *status* of a "servant under the yoke," as defined by Roman law, the same with that of a believing servant who had a "believing master," who was therefore "above a servant, a brother beloved," (Philem. 16,) and whose service was a free and loving "benefaction"? Was it Roman law, or Christ's law, which defined the relation of brother to brother in the church.

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*Note D, page 22.*

It is a very common pretense, but one which cannot be set up without great impudence, or great forgetfulness, that "the abolitionists," in the technical meaning of that word, have caused all the *political* agitations and controversies about slavery. Thirty years ago, a handful of agitators undertook opposition to slavery as their speciality. Their object was the abolition of slavery in the slaveholding States. Their method was agitation in the free States. From the beginning of their enterprise, I have had no fellowship with them. My belief is that the great body of clergy and churches in the free States concurred, and still concur, entirely in the opinion which Dr. Channing—himself an abolitionist in the larger and true sense of the word—expressed in the passage quoted by Mr. Van Dyke. It is not from them that the great agitation of the last few years has proceeded—unless we impute to them the annexation of Texas, and the war with Mexico, which that act of annexation involved. So far as the anti-slavery societies had any influence in the Presidential election of 1844, it was turned to the advantage of the candidate pledged to annexation, namely, Mr. Polk. Probably the annexation of Texas would not have been effected, or would at least have been postponed till it could have been peacefully arranged with Mexico, had the votes of the "third party," which were given to Birney, been given to Clay, in New York and some other States, in which that "third party" happened to hold the balance of power. But inasmuch as they meant not so, it would be unjust to make them responsible for the

result. Texas, at war with Mexico, was incorporated into the Union, war and all. War was carried into Mexico; broad provinces were conquered; and then arose the question how those territories should be governed. Who is responsible for that question, and for all the questions raised by the persistent attempt to nationalize an institution which only a few years ago was universally spoken of as "the peculiar institution" of certain States, and with which, as we were then so often told, nobody out of those States had any concern?

Thirteen years ago, nobody in the Northern States had ever attempted to impute to me any connection with the abolitionists who were attempting to abolish slavery in the Southern States by special organizations in this part of the country. Yet thirteen years ago, I wrote and published as follows:

"The war has already precipitated upon the country a Missouri question and more than a Missouri question, descending upon the field of politics like an avalanche of fire, and illuminating the remotest point of vision with its portentous glare. What will become of all other questions upon which parties are now marshaled, when that one question shall be found standing in the way of every party and every politician, as a question not to be evaded? What will become of all existing parties, when the Union shall be shaken with the inquiry, not whether the Wilmot proviso shall be attached to an appropriation for the purchase of peace; nor whether a treaty for the acquisition of territory shall be ratified without that proviso appended; but simply and directly whether the glorious old ordinance of 1787 shall be incorporated as fundamental law in acts for the organization of territorial governments between the upper Rio Grande and the Pacific. That question, be it remembered, will not be a question of the abolition of slavery, but, for the first time since our independence, a question of the deliberate abolition of freedom by the sovereign legislation of the Union. For it cannot be forgotten that in all those regions there is now no slave; the fundamental law there is the law of freedom. That question, moreover, will not be whether a soil and climate that repel the free and hardy laboring emigrant, and invite the toil of negroes for the cultivation of cotton and the cane, shall be given up to the planters of the South, but it will be, whether a country created for the abode of freemen, where the winds sweep pure over rugged mountains, and where the sloping hill-sides are made for flocks and the valleys for corn, shall have slavery imposed upon it, by our legislation, as the memorial of *our* conquest. The voices from the North and from the West that will thunder the answer to that question, will be the utterance of no 'third party.'" *New Englander*, April, 1847, p. 320.

The question which the war with Mexico had already precipitated on the country in 1847, is the question which has brought us to the crisis of this day. Does anybody know who made the war with Mexico, and for what purposes?